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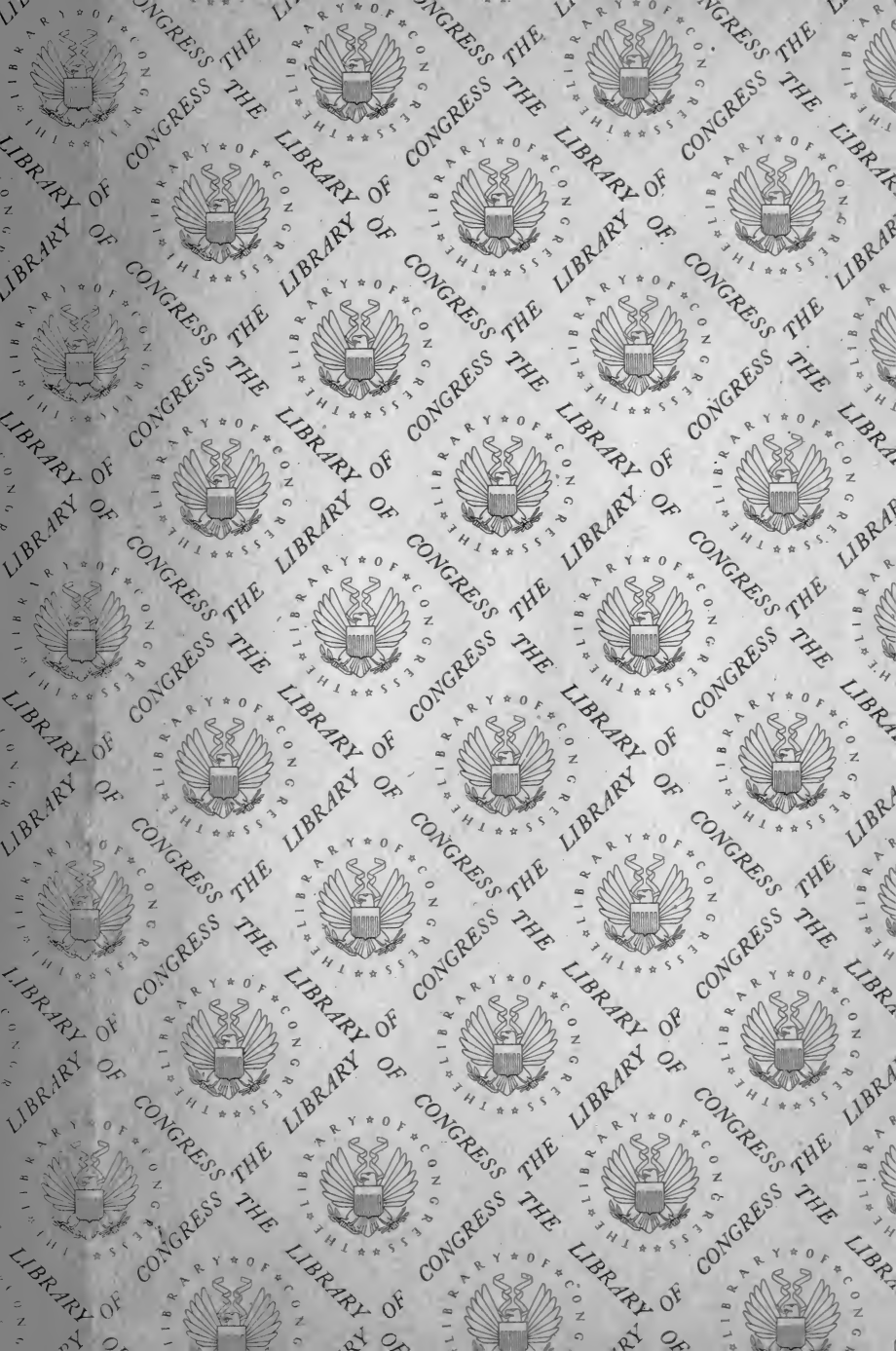
1892

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THE DEATH OF THE DISCOVERER—

BY
WILLIS STEELL



NEW YORK
HILLIER MURRAY & COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA

THE DEATH OF THE DISCOVERER

BOOKS BY WILLIS STEELL.

The Whole Truth.

Mortal Lips.

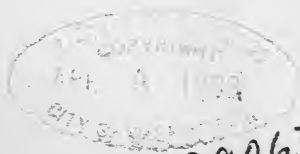
In Seville.

Isidra.

The Death of the Discoverer.

THE DEATH OF THE DISCOVERER

BY
✓
WILLIS STEELL
"



HILLIER MURRAY & CO., PUBLISHERS,
PHILADELPHIA AND NEW YORK.

(1893)

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1892

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BY

WILLIS STEELL.

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P. F. MCBREEN, Printer,
CLUB PRESS,
NEW YORK.

TO
Mrs. Eva Thomson.



THE DEATH OF THE DISCOVERER.

The Persons.

DONA BEATRICE ENRIQUES.

MARCHIONESS OF MOYA.

FERNANDO COLUMBUS.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

THE DEATH OF THE DISCOVERER.

SEGOVIA, NOVEMBER, 1504.

Scene.—The patio of the palace of the Marchioness of Moya.

MARCHIONESS.

Beatrice.

BEATRICE.

Madame ?

MARCHIONESS.

San Lucar comes to-day. What answer ?

BEATRICE.

A stale one ; tell him to come no more.

MARCHIONESS.

May I speak plainly ? You are foolish, friend,
And your's is not the age of folly :—Your son
Grows fast, proportionately wane his hopes,
Which rest in you. Why not wed this man ?

BEATRICE.

I am not marriageable, madame.

MARCHIONESS.

Oh, fie ! your fault—a girl's enthusiasm—
Long since o'ergrown by fond maternal cares,
A woman's moss and ivy, is forgot,
There's no scar in the landscape,—thou'rt a maid.

BEATRICE.

No, Marchioness, Fernando is my son.

MARCHIONESS.

A widow then, we'll call you so.

BEATRICE.

Wedded to a memory which dies not,
Save on my bier, I am not a widow.

MARCHIONESS.

The Admiral is dead, weep not, poor friend,
Too much of water he hath had already.
I loved him too. When first at Court I saw him,
I felt an inward shock, presentiment
Told me this man would one day win the world.
He was the man likest that cloudy thing

Called up by girlish magic in the convent.
Columbus ! I see his face where youth,
Eternal youth, married with riper age ;
Thought-pale and line strewn, as a man's should be ;
A palimpsest which takes a second writing,
Yet guards the first ;—Lofty towards man,
Most reverent towards Heaven.
I loved him with no earthly love, Beatrice,
But as a prophet, as God's messenger.
'Twas written he should find his first apostle
In a woman ; in me or in the Queen ;
Perhaps in neither ; I have my fancy.
Say when you saw him first, Beatrice,
First heard him speak.

BEATRICE.

Marchioness, as you will.

It was at Cordova, where he staid,
Waiting an answer from the sovereigns,
Who sat at Toledo ; a month had lagged,
Since he, a stranger on a borrowed mule,
Climbed to the stern and rock-ribbed Alcazar.

The letters which he brought were read with scorn,
Or never read at all. So without hope
To share with friends—but he had none—he came
Into my natal city. Yet did he not depart
Without attempting one by one the lords,
Either at home or on the Zocodover,
With prophecy of gain and high emprise.
Alas ! he found some harsh, some proud,
Others contemptuous, fed by revenge and spite,
Or driven by the barking of the priests.
Others were keen to listen, but their aim
Would unlock their neighbor's coffers, not their own.
And those who might have served knew not the Queen,
Whom else they would have sold. Being reduced
To misery, from fear of things ignoble,
He fled to Cordova, there made maps for sale,
And nourished hope. I saw him first at mass,
Then daily met him in the Christian mosque,
Whither I went alone. I cannot now
Blame what befell me—it was happiness—
Upon the man who was my choice delight.

I am of them who loving must be loved,
Whose love seeks love, therefore I tempted him.
I feared lest he might leave me and gave all,
Which being kept had held him by my side.
O, yes, I plead his cause ! He talked
More of that hemisphere, since bodied forth
But then a heresy, more of the round earth
Than Venus's zone. I, by woman's wiles
Narrowed the speech to us. The gain and loss
God justly meted out, yet I went free,
While he whose life blazed up in worthiest deed
Now chars obscure.

MARCHIONESS.

Beatrice, calm yourself.
The reck'ning's paid, the Admiral is dead.

BEATRICE.

I feel not so, I know he is not dead.

MARCHIONESS.

Ovando—

BEATRICE.

Lied, lady ; a base courtier,
Who snatched his crown would dote to have him so.

MARCHIONESS.

Grant you are right : say on.

BEATRICE.

He showed me maps,
Globes, raised in my mind new thoughts, set me adrift,
Upon a sea—the problems of the world.
O, I was glad to go ! Gladly in truth
Had I embarked on a frail raft with him.
He bade me tell all wild imaginings,
Vague, terrible, I had dreamed or heard,
Of lands that shared the unbounded with the ocean.
Whence came such speech to me I knew not,
Being born inland, but I think from love.
Inspired by my fond words he would begin
To count the omens that the sea in storms
Casts up to tempt men on ; gigantic reeds,
Strange trees, corpses in human shape, whose flesh
Shone with a coppery glow. I heard him vow
To wrest from the abyss a continent lost,
Restore to Europe the holy Ophir,
To the Sovereigns Solomon's treasure,

To me rare pearls, bracelets of gold, and myrrh
To keep my chamber supernatural sweet.
O yes, I shared his dream ; 'twas thus I knew
He loved me !

MARCHIONESS.

At length we touch the gist ;
You knew he loved you—then ?

BEATRICE.

Madam, his heart
Was like a child's—I can no more.

MARCHIONESS.

Heaven chose its messenger well ! Another man
Had failed, Columbus ruled your mind ; the Queen's
He influenced ; Isabella loved him
As his design. Who of women would not ?
Modest, courageous, grave, eloquent, wise,
Profound ; a noble patience and a mien
That wore misfortune like a coat of arms.
Such was he innumerably perfect,
Divinely stamped ! He won opinion when he spoke,
And when he smiled, won hearts. Isabella

Ne'er wavered in her constancy, 'twas his
In death. Almost with her last voice she asked
For tidings of Colon.

BEATRICE.

Sat the King by ?

MARCHIONESS.

Shame, Beatrice ! a moment since you proved
Another spirit. Pity felt the Queen,
Enthusiasm, what you will, not love.
Could you have seen her at Granada, when
They said the Man of Destiny had gone
To heal his hope in France ;—she sought the King,
“ You haggle, Sire,” she cried, “ be rumor true,
“ Over an empire's price ; an empire, Sire,
“ And with no less than God !” Said Ferdinand,
“ The Moors have cost us dear.” Isabella,
When she had gained her end, cried joyfully,
“ The glory be Castile's, the cost be mine !”
Could you have heard this cry, poor jealous one,
You might have traced it to a woman's heart,
Not to a Queen's !

BEATRICE.

Would she were living now.

MARCHIONESS.

O, that she were ! now a half rooted cause
Withers for lack of sun, too many tears
Will rot it ; let's dry our's. You remember
Columbus as a poor Genovese, for me
The sailor's blotted out by the return
Of the Duke Admiral.

BEATRICE.

Tell me of him.

MARCHIONESS.

The Queen first had the word from Lisbon,
It could not be surprised, quickly the court
Fermented, while abroad the trumpets sang
The high news through the streets ; all business ceased,
Men neither bought nor sold, scarcely took food,
As 'twere the morn of resurrection day.
Ferdinand, till then lukewarm, gained some heat,
Prostrate before the virgin, Isabella,
Agonized for the heathen—her first born.
Messengers sought the coast ; the provinces

Ran Spanish noblemen who lost their way
In Barcelona changed by flags and flowers.
When dawned the eager day, a long career
Of laureled arches shaded the procession.
Ahead marched Indians, the living proof
Of what had been denied by all our priests.
Strange, savage shapes were they, O thrice more strange!
Than Fancy—restless consort of good sense,
Aye seeking the unwonted—dared to paint,
Heroes of Greece returned to earth in bronze
They trod with rippling muscle, proud poised head,
And on their faces wonder unabased.
Moorish slaves came next, forty in number,
Each bearing on his head a dish of gold
Heaped high with birds and beasts unknown to us.
Strange plants and precious stones filled more than ten.
Last, on a charger, richly caparisoned
From the King's stable, rode the Man !
All eyes had sought him, and in that moment
Malice that tracks the footsteps of the great,
Venomless sank and cowered at his feet.
O, that it there had died !

BEATRICE.

You tell me naught ; like a poor novelist
Who hath no wit except to hide his lack,
You paint the common town.

MARCHIONESS.

No hand may paint
A face transfigured, his, the man inspired
With courage to uplift the veil of ocean.
If any sought upon his brow a sign,
'Twas there to read as sung in Holy Writ.
Beneath a silken canopy, King and Queen,
Rested him with themselves ; his solemn count
They heard with thirsty ears ; when 'twas finished
The three fell on their knees, as did we all,
And offered thanks to God.

BEATRICE.

O, Madame !

MARCHIONESS.

You weep, poor friend ? I count it bliss to draw
A breath of joy upon the mountain peak.
Like wine it warms the level after road.

BEATRICE.

'Tis not from sorrow.

MARCHIONESS.

These are themes that keep me from my household,
I must go, but I will send Fernando.
May his sweet face implore thee as I cannot
To give the Admiral's son an earthly father.
Attend me, if Columbus now were here
In spirit, for I fear me he is dead,
His counsel ran with mine. Adios.

BEATRICE.

Adios, Madame.

[Enter Servant.]

SERVANT.

At thereja there is a holy priest
Who seeks admittance.

BEATRICE.

Let him in, and find
Your mistress, she is but gone.

SERVANT.

Madame,
He asked for you—the Dona Beatrice.

Death of the Discoverer.

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BEATRICE.

He comes from Cordova ; admit him straight.

[Enter Columbus, wearing the robe of a Franciscan monk.]

COLUMBUS.

Peace be upon this house !

BEATRICE.

'Tis yours, father. Sit down and rest.

Are you from Cordova ?

COLUMBUS.

From Seville, lady, and farther yet.

BEATRICE.

You've voyaged ?

COLUMBUS.

To the Indies.

BEATRICE.

Columbus ?

COLUMBUS.

I come from him.

BEATRICE.

'Twas true then ! He is dead.

Death of the Discoverer.

COLUMBUS.

Still is he conscious when 'tis day or night.
I was on the caravel which sailed from Cadiz,
'Twas the Admiral's last voyage.

BEATRICE.

He will return ?

COLUMBUS.

Say why he should, save to expose himself
To novel slights of fortune, to renew
His enemies' scorn ? Excess of misery
Awaits him here ; he's human and compares
Times past and present, what he was and is

BEATRICE.

Yet has he friends who fain would weep with him,
Or better, dry his tears. Words are weak.
But not so weak but they have balm to suage
The festering mind. Would that he might return !

COLUMBUS.

Would that he might, only to hear you speak.
Often we expend the coin of friendship
To have it portioned base ; in prosperous days

Th'exchange rings sound enough, in poor, not so.
Beatrice, your love shall heal Columbus.

BEATRICE.

You're gentle, sir, not as they are at court.
Speak on, I pray you.

COLUMBUS.

No more in that strain.
The Admiral sends by me for your forgiveness.

BEATRICE.

Mine? Sir, you jest. If he were here that I
Might vaunt his heroism, salve his sores,
Match his submission to the will of God!
But I cannot forgive.

COLUMBUS.

All else were vain.

BEATRICE.

You apprehend me not. His nobleness
Has some infected me. What's to forgive?

COLUMBUS.

Speak not so quickly, madame, spare your ransom
Of this poor haughty man, till you have marked

And counted well the cost. Were he here
As I am, he would not lightly wish
Your pity ; he would as he deserved
Pay his own punishment, and expiate
Another's anguish. Madame, Beatrice !
He's at the pass when all his boasted trophies
Hang sullen like damp rags, all his hopes
Have suffered shipwreck, while his days
Draw near to nature's end. Where seek the cause ?
In man, or in the King, or in himself ?
None fits the case. Back, back of all
Another shipwreck, that of a trusting heart,
Lies, and his proudest ships shook when they crossed
Its drownèd masts. No strange eye marked its grave,
But he has never sailed so far away
He could not chart the place.

BEATRICE.

Father, your robe is holy, yet I say
You badly learned your task ; Columbus
Has wrought no shipwreck, rather has he saved
A woman from the emptiness of life.

Say it were so ; since the beginning
The purest men have erred, and will again.
How sad I am who thought your visit happy !
Because I hear he troubles for another,
Who has so great dejection in himself.
Now, antidote your poison, what's to risk ?

COLUMBUS.

Madame, he needs your prayers, his plight is sad,
His tribulation none the less grievous
Because 'tis graved on marble. Ere he dies
He would acquit his conscience. Hear him say :
"Never in these long wanderings on the ocean
Have I in thought neglected that fond heart,
'To whom I bring my heart for lightening,
"Full as it is of every kind of woe
" 'Twill not run over, if she answer make,
" 'All I forgive and I reproach thee not !' "

BEATRICE.

O, were he here I could not say the words,—
For joy would hold me speechless ! Blessed hour
I met Columbus ! Talk no more of that.

Speak of him ; how did you leave him ? Where ?
Is he like to sail ? And his colonies—
Prosper they to his taste ? Speak, father !

COLUMBUS.

His life is like a day that begins gray
And ends in black, at noon the clouds unlace
To let his name shine briefly on the world.
So much he had and seeks to be content,
But age, infirmity and dissension
Are evils hard to bear, yet in his God
That led him where he found the key to Ocean,
His trust is stout ! Columbus dead,
The Indies will not die !

BEATRICE. (*Aside.*)

Who speaks thus,
So proud, so high ? This, this is he !
(*Aloud.*) He mourns
Affliction present and forgets the past ?

COLUMBUS.

No, O no ! Who caused them, God or the world ?
God's promises he hath kept unbroken ;

All that God owed he rendered to the brim ;
Man is man.

BEATRICE, (*Aside.*)

Not yet I'll recognize him,
But bear his mask awhile ; I could not speak
Save in this mimic play for crowding tears.
O change that baffled love, can this be he,
The Admiral, the Discoverer, Columbus ?
I loved thee e'er preferment took thy hand,
I loved thee when my rival was the world,
Love reckons not by fortune, good or ill,
So will I prove the ditch where thou art fallen
Is dearer than the top ; I'll join thee there !

COLUMBUS.

Peace rest upon this house ; I will retire.

BEATRICE.

Stay till I understand. (*Aside.*) Now to betray him.
(*Aloud.*) When he sailed Columbus bore with him
Two hundred men and letters of the King,
With which to curb Ovando.

COLUMBUS.

Ovando !

His name sticks in my throat ; he a Spaniard !
He from a savage beast descended ;
Imprisoned generations made him tame or seem so.
For when some blood he tasted, a fury
Native and uncontrolled seized him again.
In a tempest, a storm more terrible
Than man before had ridden, Ovando
Denied our sails a harbor ; when the winds,
Less pitiless than he, had cast us up,
Wrecks on a hostile coast, he let us starve
Thirteen dire months upon those rotting planks
Before he sent us food ; he a Spaniard !
Would that the caitiff dared to cross the sea,
I'd have his head of the King !

BEATRICE.

Dear, my lord—

COLUMBUS.

You think I speak too harshly, which beseems
Neither my age or cloth ? To be tied thus

By every human ill passes my strength ;
To see my enemies in favor,
My friends banished ; to grieve over the land
I found a garden and have left a grave !
No, it cannot be ! I shall not leave
You in this piteous plight, my Indians !
I am old, but was not Abraham old ?
Was Sarah young ? Once more I'll trim my sails
Into the West ! The King must hear me,
Grant me men and power, as God will give me health,
Renew my youth, and send me to my own ;
As fresh in spirit, unsubdued in will,
Confident of the future—Ah !

BEATRICE.

My heart, you are sick ! Here, some one !

COLUMBUS.

Call not,

I am better ; what you see is age ;
Merely to will steals from my remnant.
Who comes ?

[Enter Fernando.]

FERNANDO.

Mother, the Marchioness sent me hither,
She said you were alone.

COLUMBUS.

Who is this ?

BEATRICE. (*Faintly.*)

'Tis Fernando, 'tis my son !

COLUMBUS.

Fernando !

How like to thee he is, how like to thee !
I had not heard of him—a lovely boy,
Graceful as youth should be while on his brow
I mark a serious cast, Beatrice,
May I kiss the lad ?

BEATRICE.

Fernando, greet him

Father !

COLUMBUS. (*Embracing Fernando.*)

Is there such happiness reserved for me ?
Whom the world deems well paid with simple life ?
My son ! My son ! as stolen from my arms,
And now restored by the fond thief, I ask

Am I more glad or sad that late I know thee ?
Once I had marked for thee a lofty place,
Advanced thee by my side, preserved thee, too,
From griefs till time had seasoned well thy mind.
Love and ambition bloom not on dead boughs,
The pride within my soul is humbled now,
And I am fain to trust me in thy arms,
Begging a single kiss without more words.
Why should I set thy mind to pondering
On what cannot be answered ? 'Tis enough
That this is thou. Another kiss in love !
If I had pictured thee, my son ! my son !
'Twould have been thus, remembering thy mother.
Fernando, what's thy years ?

FERNANDO.

Fourteen, father.

COLUMBUS.

Dost love thy mother, boy ?

FERNANDO.

O, that I do !

Why are you weeping, mother ?

COLUMBUS.

Weep not. To other women leave the tears
That fall on sterile bosoms when they see
This motherhood, which compensating comes
To them that suffer most, but dry your eyes,
Rejoicing in this son. I prophecy
You twain shall love each other to the end.
Yet holy love needs of a trinity,
Receive a third—

BEATRICE.

Yes, yes !

COLUMBUS.

As son and brother,
Columbus' son Diego, seek him out,
Fernando, call him brother, and your son
Make him, Beatrice. O engage to this !

BEATRICE.

Sincere of heart I answer for us both.

COLUMBUS.

Let me hence quickly, lend your boyish arm
Forth to the street, my servant waits without.

BEATRICE.

Too soon !

COLUMBUS.

All's said, farewell.

BEATRICE.

But where—

COLUMBUS.

Farewell !

[Exeunt Columbus and Fernando.]

BEATRICE. (*Following.*)

You must not leave me thus ! Never a word !

I am a coward, when will heart and tongue

Patch peace and speak together ? Woeful sad

He looked, yet I'd no word. Columbus !

[Enter the Marchioness.]

MARCHIONESS.

Here's news. Columbus has returned. Start not !

At the court in vain he seeks for justice,

O the King's a stone, he feels troublesome

The Admiral's presence ; his poverty

A reproach, courts of conscience will wear him

By delays. We'll seek him out and lodge him here,
By force if need be. Why stand so dull ?

BEATRICE.

He has but gone.

MARCHIONESS.

How gone ? Who has but gone ?

BEATRICE.

Columbus.

MARCHIONESS.

In my house unknown to me !
Why did you let him go ?

BEATRICE.

Dressed as a friar
He came and guessed not that I knew him.
He's sadly altered from his memory.

MARCHIONESS.

Beat you not down his mask ?

BEATRICE.

No, I dared not.

MARCHIONESS.

Faint heart ! here comes the boy.

[Enter Fernando.]

BEATRICE.

Where did he go ?

FERNANDO.

With him and an old serving man I went
To the city gates ; he blessed and kissed me,
Bade me serve God and king ; love my mother
And Diego. Who is Diego, mother ?

BEATRICE.

Gone from Segovia ! Who was in's train ?
Rode he in a litter ?

FERNANDO.

He went afoot.

BEATRICE.

On foot ? O God !

FERNANDO.

Mother, what is it !

MARCHIONESS.

Some water, quick ! She's fainted.

II.

The Persons.

DIEGO MENDEZ.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

BEATRICE ENRIQUES.

VALLADOLID, 1506.*Scene.*—An upper chamber near San Pablo.

COLUMBUS. (*Waking.*)

Are you there, Mendez ?

MENDEZ.

But come in, my lord ; did I disturb you ?

COLUMBUS.

They bring no word from the court ?

MENDEZ.

None, nor from my master's son, nor from
My master's brother.

COLUMBUS.

Diego knows not,
Neither his uncle my distress. Mendez
Have you forgotten the lad Fernando
That day we fled Segovia? Would that he
Were here!

MENDEZ.

Gentle he seemed, yet why my lord?

COLUMBUS.

Nothing, a sick man's fancy. Sit you down.

MENDEZ.

The doctor—he has gone without his pay—
Said you must have rich food and costly wine,
Where can I find them?

COLUMBUS.

I need them not,
Only a word of kindness from my king,
The rest's past usefulness—I need them not.
But you my faithful Mendez, have you dined?

MENDEZ.

Yes, señor—trouble not.

COLUMBUS.

Not the first time
I am concerned for thee, Mendez, my son,
Loyal and generous friend that in my breast
Hath kept alive the coal of human love,
Which else ingratitude had turned to ash.
Can I forget,—to save my ill-starred life,
You kept afloat a sorry cockle-shell,
Scarce fit to ride the broad back of a calm,
In an impetuous sea and haughty wind
Four days and forty leagues? Each day for me
Spawned myriad anxious hours, each wat'ry league
Dragged my heart downward as shipwrecking thee.
And if I deemed you living, 'twas to dread
You had no food to eat. Devoted heart,
I dreamed not here in Spain to keep you scant !

MENDEZ.

Feeding upon the past, my lord, a pride
That you forget not, savors my meat,
And makes a banquet of a beggar's dish.

COLUMBUS.

Could I forget? But I would hear the tale
Anew,—perchance with creeping age I grow
Garrulous of wonders, like my Indians
Who love to sing the labors of their sires,
Upon the strand after the sun is down.
Let me hear it.

MENDEZ.

My lord the tale is long,
Yourself might tell it but for weariness.

COLUMBUS.

So I'll begin. Like driftwood Afric's storms
Cast up on Asia, helpless we lay wrecked
Between the savage shore and savage sea.
I had no heart to order—I besought
One brave man to adventure for the rest,
In a canoe across the pathless gulf,
And bring our peril to Ovando's ears.
Who volunteered for this rash service, who?
There is one Mendez! Launched was the canoe
On the contrary gulf—Jamaica sank

To a blue line behind, with zeal you sped
Your comrades on their oars laborious,
Until the horizon blushed rosy red
With the sun's amorous departing kiss.
'Twas night and while the others slept,
You watched and called the rowers turn by turn.
Aurora waked in anger, and the sea
Threatened your shallop—

MENDEZ.

Yes, and filled it too,
Till for relief we cast adrift our bread,
And spilled the calabashes of sweet water,
So 'scaped the tempest, but a horror worse
Sprang from the Tropic's womb,—a parching thirst
Dried up our veins, and all that sultry day,
We panted 'twixt two suns ; our paddles
Scarce lapped the ocean, upon their length
Gasping we lay,—one sailor sank and died
From labor, heat and thirst. 'Twas then I found
The little keg your forethought stowed away,
It saved our lives and cheered us back to toil.

Next day we watched with straining, blood-shot eyes,
For Navasa, yet, as the third day passed,
So passed the fourth, till I began to lose
Track of the hours, or only measured them
By the pulse beat of hopeless suffering.
We could not sleep at night, or if we slept
We dreamed of singing fountains, laughing streams,
And leapt awake to groan. Now, no water,
No sacred drop to ease our speech remained,—
Man by man let fall his paddle,—Despair
Dug deep his iron talons in our hearts.
That night I sat watching the horizon,
Until the moon should rise. The others slept,
And no one saw the tears of agony
Or rage I wept that I should fail to bring
News of your shipwreck to the colony.
In my soul, chaotic bitterness worked
To bring forth demons to curse God and man.
Yet had God pity ; when the moon arose,
She showed her disk eclipsed by some dark mass,
Above the ocean's level. As she clomb

That mass remained suspended, a wave's crest
It was not ! With hoarse wild cries I woke
My feeble comrades and showed them the land,
Which fast grew, as if fever,—and 'twas so—
Lent us new strength.—Señor, by dawn of day
We flouted oars and drank !

COLUMBUS.

To Heaven

For that mercy accorded you I vowed
A pilgrimage to Rome,—'tis not fulfilled,
Nor will it ever. I shall walk no more.

MENDEZ.

I pray thee say not so.

COLUMBUS.

While you were gone,
A broken dream warned me my time is brief.
Prop me up, Mendez, where left I off ?
Here : (*Reading.*) " The sovereignty of the seas
West of a line drawn down from pole to pole,
My son Diego shall inherit ;
He dying without issue, they shall pass

Unto his brother, the young Fernando."
How long since then, Mendez, is he man ?

MENDEZ.

My lord, two years, he was but fourteen then.

COLUMBUS.

Only two years, but years of poverty !
" Revenues of this mesne I thus divide :
" I give, bequeath to Don Bartholomew,
" My dear brother, two millions—" Dost thou hear,
Mendez, two millions ?

MENDEZ.

I hear, my lord.

COLUMBUS.

You hear and laugh not ? 'Tis a noble jest.
My poor Mendez ! Forgotten, save by thee.
An old man dying on a pauper's bed,
Offers his children millions, distributes
In his will seas, islands, nations, empires !
I swear they're mine to give. Who dare deny't
Since God gave them to me ? He took them not
Away,—that did an earthly king !

My breviary, Alexander's gift,
I have some words to write to Ferdinand
Which it may consecrate. Now, Mendez,
Prop me higher yet, then leave me.

MENDEZ.

Are you full strong ? You feel no pain, my lord ?

COLUMBUS.

No pain, a little bitterness of mind
So near the dregs is natural. Go now.

[Exit Mendez.]

And for Mendez, I will make provision.
Old and last comrade of my voyages,
You shall be governor of Trinidad,
I'll ask it of the king. (*Writing.*) "I beg my king
"Whom I have served even to loss of goods—"
Columbus, that loss weighs heaviest on you
Which is your least. Truly, so made is man,
He misses not the great things which were his
So much as those the meanest slave ranks high.
A trivial minus irritates his humor

Until it barnacles the man entire.
The common's never light ; irreparable
Are the petty woes of life. Once I sighed
For quiet, a smooth and calm retreat,
Where worn with voyages, with strifes and seas,
I might await the summons ; now, I groan
O'er what should not afflict ; what's to me
Nearing the grave, the little or the less ?
Why blind my eyes with glory, rank and power,
Who as a watcher calmly through a glass,
Might view the hurtling on of right or wrong,
As from another planet ? Is it true
I sigh for self alone ? No, oh no !
Let man at least be honest to himself—
I weary most because what I have sought,
I but in part accomplished. I have griefs
Which are not petty. One plaint and all is said :
I under change of times, unjust tribunals,
Ungrateful citizens, eat out my heart,
Nor poverty have I escaped ; disease
Nor sickness ; each bows me down. So shall I die,

Deformed of all I grew with careful art,
Even my name I think shall not attach
Unto the world which by God's grace I found.
Awhile I thought that name rescued in time
From the common rout and would forever blaze,
To the Creator's glory as to mine.
No more I fondly dream, content to ask
For strength for one last effort—let me die
No puny death, but one which suits Columbus !
I am too proud, mayhap, still will I strain
The ears of Heaven, God of my fathers,
Hear my petition ! If 'tis good to Thee,
Cover my shame with Thy benignancy,
And take from ills he is too weak too bear
Thy worshipper ! I pray for death,
And while I pray I feel it come—
Death, or his sister, Sleep. (*He sleeps.*)

[Enter Beatrice and Mendez.]

BEATRICE.

Surely, not here ?

MENDEZ.

Or in a poorer place
He's spent his latter years.

BEATRICE.

Blind were my spies,
Or else his enemies, for I searched in vain
At Cadiz and Sevilla, where in truth
Some trace was found, but lost. Is he bed-rid ?

MENDEZ.

This is his hour to sleep.

BEATRICE.

Watch his calm breath.
Yet what startles him ? Listen !

COLUMBUS. (*Sleeping.*)

You see me, Bobadilla,
Loaded with chains, not by your will, but mine.
Your brief authority my soldiers urge
Me to spurn to the length to show you drest
In this same clanking garment. Did I so,
Who then would chain the torment of my mind ?
Men are not wont to treat with mutineers thus,

But who shall slay that mutineer, my soul ?
What you accuse me of I know and care not,
Having felt within an accusation
Harsher than man can draw. My Indians
Are witnesses of my crime, their evils
Are justly fallen on me ; could I buy
By suffering, their return to freedom,
I'd wear ten times these chains—

MENDEZ.

See, lady, there they are—where e'er he's lived
Since then, these gyves have been the tapestry.

BEATRICE.

O cruel, cruel—

MENDEZ.

Soft, he speaks again.

COLUMBUS. (*Sleeping.*)

Ever mirage ! Each day the bows plunge through
Fantastic horizons. Above my head
Strange constellations burn, bottomless
Is the abyss—not boundless—westward still !
Yet did I err ! This night my heart is faint.

Day passes day and shapes liks shadows fly
Through the clear sea, perhaps to mock my quest,
Or an enchanted land sends forth its ghosts
To lure me farther on into the Vast
Where no land is. If I am wrong !
Food's scarce ! O God, my latter dream
Comes like a dreadful face which did oppress
Me with its sleepless eye.—

I sailed alone,
Not even discontent did share my fate,
And every wave which broke bore on its crest
A fiend which mouthed me, while the yellow sea
Frothed curses ; yet on and on and on,
The phantom ship glutted its sails with wind.
Dull eyed upon the poop I saw a man
Kneading his corded hands, shaking his unkempt hair,
And staring on the salt sea which a voice
Said he must roam forever—

What ? Mutiny !
I call on Heaven to judge 'twixt me and you,
What is my life save as a pledge for yours ?

Back to your duty. Yet hear me first :
If in the course of the third day we see
No rising land I swear I will put back
The helm for Europe. Clamorous hirelings,
Ye show the cruel mercy of small minds,
To make me set a measure on my faith !
God made you as ye think.

Those rushes, whence come they—that hawthorn bough ?
By the mass, I see a nest built on a branch,
The wind has cut it but the mother bird
Sits firm upon the cradle of the waves.
She never sailed from Spain !

BEATRICE.

He sighs !

MENDEZ.

Madame, well he may.

COLUMBUS. (*Sleeping.*)

Rodrigo, follow my eyes and see
Against the dusk of Heaven, a flickering light.
You see it ! Look again ! You see it too !

I dare not counsel further, to your cabin.
Till hope no more deludes I pray you silence.
Good rest,—Alone ! Alone !

MENDEZ.

His mind will wander now. Oft doth he dream,
Making of half a century scarce an hour.

BEATRICE.

I see him on the deck alone, the eve
Of Salvador !

COLUMBUS.

Have I done well? Hath God to me
A mystery vouched which I have not profaned ?
Let me not now through frailty cheat the end—
Still were there prophets who deceived themselves—
This hour is bitterer than first disdain.
Fain would my heart be back in Genoa,
Sure from the scorpion tail success doth wear
As from the fangs of failure. Why choose me ?
Perceiving me set forth, men called me brave,
Who only was discreet. What is courage
Without a ballast of wisdom ? 'Tis a cargo

Which never comes to port. With what contempt
I see myself a traitor to myself !
Alas, I'm human ! To-night I tremble
As one who held the hand-clasp of his God
Which sudden is withdrawn. Desert me not
Father in Heaven, nor if 'tis good to Thee
Suffer Thy son to be the sport of fate !
Hell has a remedy—if to-morrow show
Our lone ship rippling through the landless sea,
Over the side deliverance offers.
Hence tempter ! I will quaff the cup.

How lovely is the night that like a hand
Lays healing touch upon this fevered head !
By day we may not see these myriad stars,
If it were alway day so would men swear
There is no other world but earth and sun.
Night doth reveal God's endless vistas,
And the philosopher who sees shall say :
He that hath sown so prodigal the stars,
Those islands of the sky, hath not the ocean
Our mimic sky, more niggardly endowed.

O restless thoughts, O fears like angry wasps
Return not ye so soon again to sting !
Yonder is land, land must lie yonder,
Or if not, wherefore was my mind
Even from a child the mirror of a world ?
Wherefore dreamt I, despite my tutors,
Aye, despite myself, of hidden climes ?
Of peoples whom no eye save mine had seen,
And mine a dreamer's ? If I must fail
At the supreme moment, which my years half-travelled
Have cruelly attained—why was I born at all ?
Hush ! Profanation never can prevail
When prayer has failed to compass.
Ah, me, ah me ! If I could sleep !
These thoughts which lead nowhere,
But like the maelstrom, circle round and round,
Suck me to madness.

Up shines that light again !
Grant I dare trust my eyes—Rodrigo saw it,
Jesu forgive my murmurs ! Is it Asia ?
Hark the shot ! The sailors see it—land !

Land ! Land in sight ! Land, ho !
I cannot see for tears my new born world !

BEATRICE.

His transport wakes him, lo, to misery !

COLUMBUS. (*Starting up.*)

I've had a wondrous dream, I thought I sailed
But you are here, beloved, 'twas a dream—
Most life-like—they say our future warns so.
Draw nearer, Filippa.

BEATRICE.

Filippa !

MENDEZ.

Diego's mother, dead these twenty years.

BEATRICE.

O, this is bitter ! Leave us together.

[Exit Mendez.]

COLUMBUS.

Give me your hand, Filippa ; I've been sick ?
So ? But I live still, and this is Lisbon.
Where's our boy ? Is he with Perestrella ?

BEATRICE. (*Weeping.*)

Yea, my lord.

COLUMBUS.

Why do you weep, Filippa ?

BEATRICE.

With joy, but not for joy. Tell me your dream,
But briefly, you're not strong.

COLUMBUS.

Methought I had reached that distant shore
Of which you're pettish, having heard too much,
But had you looked with me your wonder grew
Till it o'ertopped the oak. I saw a world
Naked upon its mother's lap, yet rich
With what our world calls wealth.
Where grew the ripest fruits, and where found root
The greenest amplest trees, the common men
To make a novel garden for their king,
Fashioned of gold all fruits, all plants, all trees,
So light they held the jaundiced stuff, but prized
The cunning work. These simple Indians,
By faith and courage I call conquerors.

They seemed not strangers, but God's gift to me
To bind my service to his Sepulchre.
Methought I read their past ; obscure as fate,
Yet legible to one coming in peace,
For him they dimly sought. Young were they,
But young in tenderness,—in tradition,
Old as the Spains. The fathers lived and wrought,
And dying, bequeathed unto their children,
A sweet and secret hope to stir their hearts,
And keep them warm, until the promised sign
God—for surely it was God—should give.
Meanwhile they turned their faces to the East.
One time upon their seers the craving grew
To know the path whence came they, and whither
One generation goeth while another mourns.
These hollowed them a bark and swept to sea
Braving the wrath of fabled hurricanes,
Whose prey Correa saw them. Howbeit none returned,
The people nourished hope, and kept the beach
Ruddy with fires to cheer the returning bark.

So when they saw us land, bearded and mailed,
They trembled but with awe,—truly they deemed,
At last they saw their Argonauts in port.
Loud rang their acclamation, on the strand
They bowed and worshipped me ; when I would not,
They gently brought me to their king, and he
Fit sovereign of that generous people,
Halved his dear realm with me—
Our very steeds were shod with massy gold
We were so rich. You ask were we content ?

Changes my dream—A year or more had lapsed,
Convenient season to allure these men
To virtue and beget a friendly faith ;
Convenient too to wile their innocence.
Like demons sowing broken oaths and lies
We scourged the land and wheresoe'er we set
Our feet, the evil scarlet flowers
Of avarice failed not to burst and bloom.
At length I saw these unarmed children rise
Against the conquerors and for defense

Of home and liberty rush to certain death ;
Yes, I saw them choose to die of hunger
Rather than take of us who had betrayed them,
A drop of nourishment. Blood blinded me,
And sorrow's spur I thought my dream had touched.

That Europe held reserved. At home
Priests called me godless, courtiers stole my titles,
And new adventures sapped my revenues.
I saw myself, Filippa, old and poor,
Congealed if not extinguished, and alone.
You were not there !

BEATRICE.

Alas !

COLUMBUS.

A country strange is dreamland !
Like purgatory, we walk there alone,
No hand to guide, no friendly voice to cheer.
Where were you, Filippa, life of my life,
That in these filled ambitions had no part ?

BEATRICE.

Who knows, my lord ?

COLUMBUS.

You're here now—closer still—

Cheek against cheek. It is well, Filippa,
To have dreamed these gilded ghastly things ;
Awake I've dreamed too much ; now will I toil
Without an outer thought, make maps and sell 'em,
Teach my son Diego, and live for you—
Oh, what's this ?

BEATRICE.

My lord ?

COLUMBUS.

You are not Filippa !

BEATRICE.

Alas, I am not.

COLUMBUS.

The waking is the dream. Yes, I am old,
Nor may complain of nature, nor struggle
For my poor inch of life. I have lived.
My destiny was there, there in the Occident !
Lady, I know you now, you're Beatrice.

BEATRICE.

Whoe'er may give thee comfort I would be.

COLUMBUS.

Madame, I remember ; madame, your thought
Lies heavy on my conscience.

BEATRICE.

Say not so.

Love, the priest ordained by nature, married us.

COLUMBUS.

Shadowy words, wherewith man palliates
A sinful debt but cannot wipe it out.

BEATRICE.

Listen, Columbus, had I more to give—
He hears me not ! His eyes are far again.

COLUMBUS. (*Faintly.*)

But a step farther, Diego, my lad—
Courage ! At that poplar I'll take you up.
Cheer ! cheer my son—

BEATRICE.

He's in the past—

COLUMBUS.

Filippa !

[Enter Mendez.]

MENDEZ.

Called my master ?

BEATRICE.

He called his wife. He's dead.

MENDEZ.

Dead !

BEATRICE.

Thou livest. Here's the beginning and the end.

Creation and fruition of the earth

Met in this man ; the world's circle's joined.

Round it will future generations tread,

Till the new world is peopled like the old,

All careless of Columbus.

NOTES

NOTES.

He was the man likest that cloudy thing.

Ferdinand Columbus has minutely described the appearance of his father. The discoverer was tall and well made, his head large, with an aquiline nose, eyes light blue or gray blue, a fresh complexion and red hair, though incessant toil and exposure had bronzed the former and bleached the latter before he reached the age of thirty. Columbus had a majestic presence, with much dignity and at the same time affability of manner. In discourse he was eloquent, in deportment generally temperate, but a sally of passion would sometimes hurry him into too lively an expression of his sentiments, which created enemies for him in the punctilious Spanish Court. He was abstemious in his diet, indulged little in amusements of any kind, and, in truth, seemed too much absorbed by the great cause to which he had con-

secrated his life to allow scope for the lower pursuits and pleasures which engage ordinary men.

On the very day of the departure of the squadron on Columbus' third voyage the admiral showed that there was a limit to his self-command. He had met with discouraging delays in preparing for this voyage such as would have cast down ordinary men. All his plans had been impeded and retarded by petty officials, the more as they looked upon him at the time as a man declining in popularity who might be offended with impunity. Among them was one Ximeno Breviesca, accountant of the Bishop of Badajos, Juan de Fonseca, who had in charge the affairs of the Indies. Well knowing the enmity his master bore to Columbus, the accountant assailed the admiral with unbridled insolence on the shore as he was about to embark. This was the last straw which the patience of Columbus could not bear. He struck the accountant to the ground and kicked him repeatedly, "venting," says Irving, "in this unguarded paroxysm, the accumulated griefs and vexations which had long rankled in his mind."

Without attempting one by one the lords.

It would seem that Columbus after he had received from Ferdinand and Isabella the answer that "although they were too much occupied at present to embark in his undertaking, yet, at the conclusion of the war (with the Moors) they should find both time and inclination to treat with him," accepted it as a final refusal. He then endeavored to interest noblemen of large estates in his scheme of discovery. Among others it is known that he made application to the dukes of Medina Sidonia and Medina Celi successively, probably thinking that the contiguity of their estates to the seashore would dispose them to maritime adventure on a vast scale, as it had already done in a small way. But neither one of these powerful Spaniards would assume a risk which the crown declined as too hazardous.

Would she were living now.

On the return of Columbus to Spain after his fourth, last and most disastrous voyage he heard that the Queen

was dead. In the memoirs of Columbus by his son Ferdinand we read :

“The death of his friend on whom he had so confidently relied for justice was a heavy blow to him, for she had always granted him her favor and protection, while the King had not only been indifferent, but positively unfriendly.”

A few weeks before Columbus set out on this voyage he received a gracious letter from Isabella—signed, indeed, by both sovereigns, but conceived in her kindly spirit—assuring him of their purpose to keep inviolate all their engagements with him and to perpetuate the inheritance of his honors in his family. This was the last letter ever addressed to Columbus by his royal mistress.

Of the Duke-Admiral.

Columbus required his descendants always to sign themselves El Almirante Duque. (Navarrete Tom. II., p. 229.) In 1680, the Duke of Veragua, then the honored head of the family of Columbus, and Captain-Gen-

eral of the kingdom of Valencia, wrote a letter to Calderon de la Barca asking for a list of his dramas, by which, as a friend and admirer, he might venture to make a collection of them for himself. To this he signed himself proudly in the manner ordered by the founder of his house.

Of the two sons of Columbus, Fernando, illegitimate, inherited his father's genius, and Diego, his honors and estates. The latter married a lady of the great Toledo family, niece of the Duke of Alva. The titles of Duke of Veragua and Marquis of Jamaica still distinguish the family. They are derived from the places visited by the admiral in his last voyage.

The Queen first had the news from Lisbon.

“Let processions be made, festivals held, temples be filled with branches and flowers, for Christ rejoices on earth as in heaven, seeing the future redemption of souls. Let us rejoice, also, for the temporal benefit likely to result, not merely to Spain, but to all Christendom.”

Letter of Columbus on his arrival at Lisbon to the Treasurer Sanchez.

Ahead marched Indians.

The wildest and most extravagant ideas were prevalent in Spain regarding the Indians years after Columbus' death. If this is not true how could dramas like Lope de Vega's "The New World of Columbus," have met with forbearing listeners. (Comedias de Lope de Vega, Tom. XI., Barcelona, 1618, ff. 143, 144.) The greater part of the action of this play passes in the New World, and among the personages are American Indians. Before the appearance of Europeans among them they sing about Phœbus and Diana! and while, from the first they talk nothing but Spanish, they frequently pretend, after the arrival of the Spaniards, to be unable to understand a word of their language.

Yet "this play," says Mr. Ticknor, in his History of Spanish Literature, "is not without marks of Lope's peculiar talent. The scenes in which the natural feelings of the simple and ignorant natives are brought out, and

those in which Columbus appear—always dignified and gentle—are not without merit.”

Beneath a Silken Canopy King and Queen.

It was the middle of April, 1493, when Columbus reached Barcelona, where he had been impatiently expected. Every window, balcony and housetop which could afford a glimpse of him was crowded with spectators. At noon Columbus entered the city. He was accompanied by several of the native islanders, wearing their simple barbaric costume, and decorated with collars, bracelets and anklets of gold rudely fashioned. At the gates of the city the authorities of Barcelona and the cavaliers in attendance on the court met and escorted him to the alcazar of the Moorish kings in the Calle Ancha, where Ferdinand and Isabella, under a canopy of state, sat awaiting his arrival. As he knelt before them they arose, and extending their hands, caused him to be seated beside them. They then asked for a recital of his adventures, and when he had spoken the King and

Queen, together with all present, prostrated themselves on their knees in thanksgiving, while the choir of the royal chapel poured forth the solemn strains of the *Te Deum Laudamus*.

'Tis yours, father.

The authorities bear out the fact that Columbus, subsequent to his first voyage, adopted the robe of a Franciscan Monk, *cord por devocian*, and all accessories. To gather from them, it appears that the admiral, wearing the cord of St. Francis, and consecrating to wars against unbelief in Asia the wealth he was seeking in the Indies, was a noted figure in the streets of Seville. See Bernaldez, *Chronica*, c. 131, and the MS. of Navarrete, *Coleccion de Viages*, Tom. 1, p. 72; Tom. 11, p. 282.

Andres Bernaldez's chronicle constitutes excellent material for the historian of Columbus in the blush of success. In 1496 Columbus was a guest at the house of Bernaldez and entrusted to his care valuable manuscripts. The curate of Los Palacios expressly states that

when Columbus came to court in 1496 he was dressed as a Franciscan monk.

He a Spaniard.

Columbus, as is well known, was not born a Spaniard, but whoever reads his letters published in the Navarrete Voyages, or in the translation published in Boston, 1827, of extracts made from the abstract account of his first voyage addressed to Ferdinand and Isabella, will see how completely he accepted them for sovereigns and how thoroughly he felt himself to be in accord with the Spanish character. In fact, the discoverer may be taken for a type of the Spaniard of his age, and the highest type. His loyalty, religious faith, enthusiasm and love of adventure were all Spanish, rather than Italian.

Denied our sails a harbor.

The story of the fourth voyage is one of prolonged disaster. Columbus had received instructions not to touch at St. Domingo (Hispaniola) on his outward voy-

age, but a storm approaching compelled him to lower his pride to the churlish governor, Ovando. It was useless, and the governor ordered him out of the harbor. This storm, the same which destroyed the fleet of Bobadilla and the enemies of Columbus, as well as two hundred thousand castellanos of gold, Columbus rode out in safety behind the lee of the island. Later, after having been defeated in an attempt to establish a colony on the mainland, by the ferocity of the savages, he was wrecked on the island of Jamaica. There the malice of Ovando kept him imprisoned for more than a year, and at last he only escaped by freighting a vessel at his own expense, in which he re-embarked the remnant of his crew.

Would that the caitiff dared to cross the sea.

Don Nicholas de Ovando, comendador of Lares of the military order of Alcantara, was a man after King Ferdinand's own heart, or rather brain, which was not heated by any fanaticism. He judged the colonies of Spain in America as valuable according to the amount

of gold they produced—and he estimated the Indians no higher than beasts of burden. Avaricious he may have been, but there is no charge of dishonesty resting upon his character, and no doubt it would have been difficult to remove him from the post which, measured by a monetary standard, he filled so well. Ovando was, besides, a man of acknowledged prudence and sagacity, temperate in his habits, and plausible and politic in his address. His administration was the very reverse of Bobadilla's, which had been lax in the extreme.

I found a garden and have left a grave.

Columbus loved the people of the strange continent which he had discovered—loved them as his own children, and he frequently writes piteously of their servile and unenlightened condition as if in truth they were his own. The fact that he earnestly desired that the soil of the New World should never be trodden by any foot save that of a Roman Catholic Christian, betrays not so much bigotry as paternal anxiety.

The defense of Columbus' treatment of the Indians, which called forth Isabella's exclamation, "By what authority does Columbus venture thus to dispose of my subjects!" must be left to historians.

I am old, but was not Abraham old?

In the letter to the sovereigns descriptive of his fourth voyage (Navarrete, Tom. 1, pp. 296, 312) Columbus related a vision that he believed had been vouchsafed to him for his consolation when he was left alone on a hostile coast, the other vessel with his men, which had sailed into the mouth of the river at Veragua, having been wrecked there. The following is a translation of this letter :

"I was left solitary on a coast so dangerous with a strong fever and grievously worn down. Hope of escape was dead within me. I climbed aloft with difficulty, calling anxiously and not without many tears for help upon your Majesties' captains from all the four winds of heaven. But none made me answer. Wearied and still

moaning I fell asleep, and heard a pitiful voice which said : ‘ O, fool, and slow to trust and serve thy God, the God of all ! What did He more for Moses, or for David His Servant ? Ever since thou wast born, thou hast been His especial charge. When He saw thee at the age wherewith He was content, He made thy name to sound marvelously on the earth. The Indies, which are a part of the world, and so rich, He gave them to thee for thine own, and thou hast divided them unto others as seemed good to thyself, for He granted thee power to do so. Of the barriers of the great ocean, which were bound up with such mighty chains, He hath given unto thee the keys. Thou hast been obeyed in many lands, and thou hast gained an honored name among Christian men. What did He more for the people of Israel when he led them forth from Egypt ? Or for David, whom from a shepherd He made king in Judea ? Turn, thou, then, again unto Him, and confess thy sins. His mercy is infinite.

“ ‘ Thine old age shall not hinder thee of any great thing. Abraham was above a hundred years old when he

begat Isaac ; and Sarah, was she young ? Thou callest for uncertain help ; answer, who hath afflicted thee so much and so often ? God or the world ? The privileges and promises that God giveth He breaketh not, nor, after He hath received service, doth He say that thus was not His mind and that His meaning was other. Neither punisheth He, in order to hide a refusal of justice. What He promiseth, that He fulfilleth, and yet more. And doth the world thus ? I have told thee what thy Maker hath done for thee, and what He doth for all. Even now He in part sheweth thee the reward of the sorrows and dangers thou hast gone through in serving others !' All this heard I as one half dead ; but answer had I none to words so true, save tears for my sins. And whosoever it might be that thus spake, he ended, saying, 'Fear not, be of good cheer ; all these thy griefs are written in marble, and not without cause !' And I arose as soon as I might, and at the end of nine days the weather became calm."

This extraordinary letter bears date Jamaica, 7 July, 1503.

West of a line drawn down from pole to pole.

In order to forestall the claims of future discoverers, especially their rival, King John of Portugal, Ferdinand and Isabella, before the second voyage of Columbus, applied to the court of Rome to confirm them in the possession of the islands he had visited as well as neighboring islands and the continent yet untrodden by Christians. This they did recognizing the ancient authority of the pope, as vicar of Christ, to dispose of all countries inhabited by heathen nations in favor of Christian potentates.

Alexander the Sixth then sat on the pontifical throne and he willingly granted the sanction of the Church to its dutiful children, Ferdinand and Isabella. Accordingly, on May 3, 1493, he published a bull confirming them in possession of all lands discovered, or hereafter to be discovered by them in the western ocean. On the 4th of May, Alexander issued a second bull in which he defined with precision the lands covered in his grant of the preceding day, as all such lands which should be discovered to the west and south of an imaginary line,

to be drawn from pole to pole, at a distance of one hundred leagues to the west of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands. By arbitration with the Portuguese this line of demarcation was subsequently extended to three hundred and seventy leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, beyond which, all discoveries should appertain to the Spanish nation.

My breviary—Alexander's gift.

Whatever they may have written of Pope Alexander to show his degraded moral character, the possession of an acute mind which warned him to be among the first to recognize success wherever it could be found, has never been denied him by historians. Agreeable to his custom he hastened to make presents to Columbus and invited him to a correspondence. Some of these letters are to be found in the Navarrete Collection. One of the most interesting is that of date February, 1502, Tom. II, p. 282, wherein Columbus airs his greatest extravagance, the project of a crusade for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre.

I swear they're mine to give.

By the definitive arrangement concluded with the sovereigns at Santa Fe, April 17th, 1492, Columbus was constituted their admiral, viceroy and governor-general of all such islands and continents as he should discover in the western ocean, with the privilege of nominating three candidates, for the selection of one by the crown, for the government of each of these territories. Columbus was to be vested with exclusive right of jurisdiction over all commercial transactions within his admiralty and was to be entitled to one-tenth of all the products and profits within the limits of his discoveries. A subsequent ordinance settled the official dignities above enumerated on him and his heirs forever.

Prescott, Ferdinand and Isabella, Part 1, chap. xxi.

Even I think my name shall not attach.

This scarcely means that Columbus foresaw the good fortune of Americus Vesputius, whose name was to be

bestowed on the New World. Writers on events, the first who differed from the old chronicles in that they began to deal in true history, are known in the history of Spanish literature by works on the discoveries as early as 1509, and they doubtless had forerunners among the men who embarked for the Indies with Columbus on the first voyage.

The *Historiadores Primitivos* early show a neglect or a failure to give Columbus his full honors. The voluminous documents and letters left by Fernando Cortez el Conquistador naturally enough, considering their author, set forth his own services. He reached the New World in 1504, but he first wrote in about 1519, letters which have great value, but exist only in part.

Francisco Lopez de Gomara in his own time was stigmatized as a creature of Cortez, writing only what his master told him and anxious to keep the favor of that master. He is the oldest of the regular historians of the discoveries and conquests. Yet his *Conquest of New Spain* is in truth a life of Cortez, and under this title it was reprinted by Bustamente, in

Mexico, in 1826. This work was first printed in Spain in 1553.

Oviedo is another adventurer who early came to America, being sent to San Domingo in 1513 as a supervisor of gold smeltings. His "Natural and General History of the Indies," was published in 21 books, in 1535.

This rambling and discursive writer had little to say of Columbus, but, as its title implies, his work is a series of accounts of the natural condition, aboriginal inhabitants and political affairs in America. The full name of this historian is Gonzolo Fernandez de Oviedo.

You see me, Bobadilla.

In July, 1500, Don Francisco de Bobadilla was sent to the colony by the sovereigns with powers intended to heal the factious strife there. At this time the colonial affairs were in the most deplorable condition and rumors were every day reaching Spain of the distractions of the community, accompanied with severe imputations on the

conduct of Columbus and his brother Bartholomew, who were loudly accused of oppressing both Spaniards and Indians, and of sacrificing the public interests in the most unscrupulous way to their own. Two various, but equally sincere accounts of the rebellion against Columbus's authority vested in the person of his brother, may be read in the works of Humboldt and Prescott. We are concerned in the dramatic feature of the episode and need only say that no more unhappy choice of an agent, intended to heal dissension, could, in the judgment of contemporary and modern historians, have been chosen than Bobadilla. The brief authority bestowed on him swelled him up with unmeasurable insolence, and he interpreted his functions as those of a judge to execute the law on Columbus as if he had been a convicted criminal. He made no pretense at affecting the forms of a legal trial, but as soon as he arrived at the island, ordered Columbus to be manacled and thrown into prison. The admiral submitted without resistance and went on board a vessel, which sailed for Spain, in chains, which were not once taken off during the passage.

Ferdinand Columbus testifies that his father kept the fetters in which he was brought home hanging up in an apartment of his house as a perpetual memorial of national ingratitude, and, when he died, ordered them to be buried in the same grave with himself.

Still were there prophets who deceived themselves.

Columbus believed himself to be inspired, yet none who wishes to know him truly has failed to mark the sharp contradiction between two sides of his character. He was the dreamy prophet, but he was also the bold and skillful navigator. In all that he did, said and wrote there may be found a singular mixture of practical judgment and wild speculation. It is not far fetched to suppose that in one character he doubted himself in the other. As a practical seaman he must have frequently doubted the visions which enabled him to see beyond the waste of waters that broad continent which his imagination deemed needful to balance the world, but happily his courage was so great that the terrors of

an unsailed ocean only spurred him on. Happily his adventurous spirit rose equal to prophecy and he saw from the outset what he at last so gloriously accomplished. In the subsequent voyages no disappointment of his hopes really cast him down. He rose from one disillusion on the wings of another. These enthusiastic soarings of the imagination carried him across the unknown seas to search for a continent. Without them he might, like other sages, have been content to reason calmly in his closet about the probability of a continent existing in the west.

Even from a child the mirror of a world.

Spanish writers, whether of history, verse or romance, have delighted to accept the suggestion—grateful to all religious minds—that Columbus was moved by Divine inspiration. This was founded as we know on the personal convictions of Columbus himself. In Spain, however, the common traditions are that Columbus was born at Nervi, and that he received from a dying

pilot at Madeira the charts that led him to his grand adventure.

*I saw a world
Naked upon it's mother's lap.*

Several passages in the letters of Columbus show that he had a love for the beautiful in nature and the pen of a poet to describe it. In his account of his third voyage, to the King and Queen he describes the newly discovered continent of South America in rich and beautiful language. This account contains the famous passage about the Orinoco River which he thought issued out of the terrestrial paradise. (Navarrete, Col., Tom. 1, pp. 256, etc.)

*On the strand,
They bowed and worshiped me.*

In Columbus' speculations about the prophecies, (Navarrete, Tom. 11, pp. 260-273) we find that he thought himself called on to fulfill that in the eighteenth

psalm, which reads thus : "Thou hast made me the head of the heathen ; a people whom I have not known shall serve me. As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me ; the strangers shall submit themselves unto me." vv. 43, 44.

Convenient too, to wile their innocence.

Civilized Europe in its treatment of the Indians of America cannot put in the plea of ignorance. It was instructed from the first by Bartolome de las Casas, a Sevillian gentleman who went to the Indies in 1498 or no later than 1502, and from the time of his arrival in Hispaniola made himself the defender of the Indians who were wasting away under the severity of their labors and servitude. Las Casas published "A Very Short Account of the Ruin of the Indies," in which the author's fervor in depicting the wrongs and sufferings of a gentle race, brought all Europe to a sense of Spain's injustice. He followed this with other treatises on the same subject and, in fact, he never ceased to agitate it

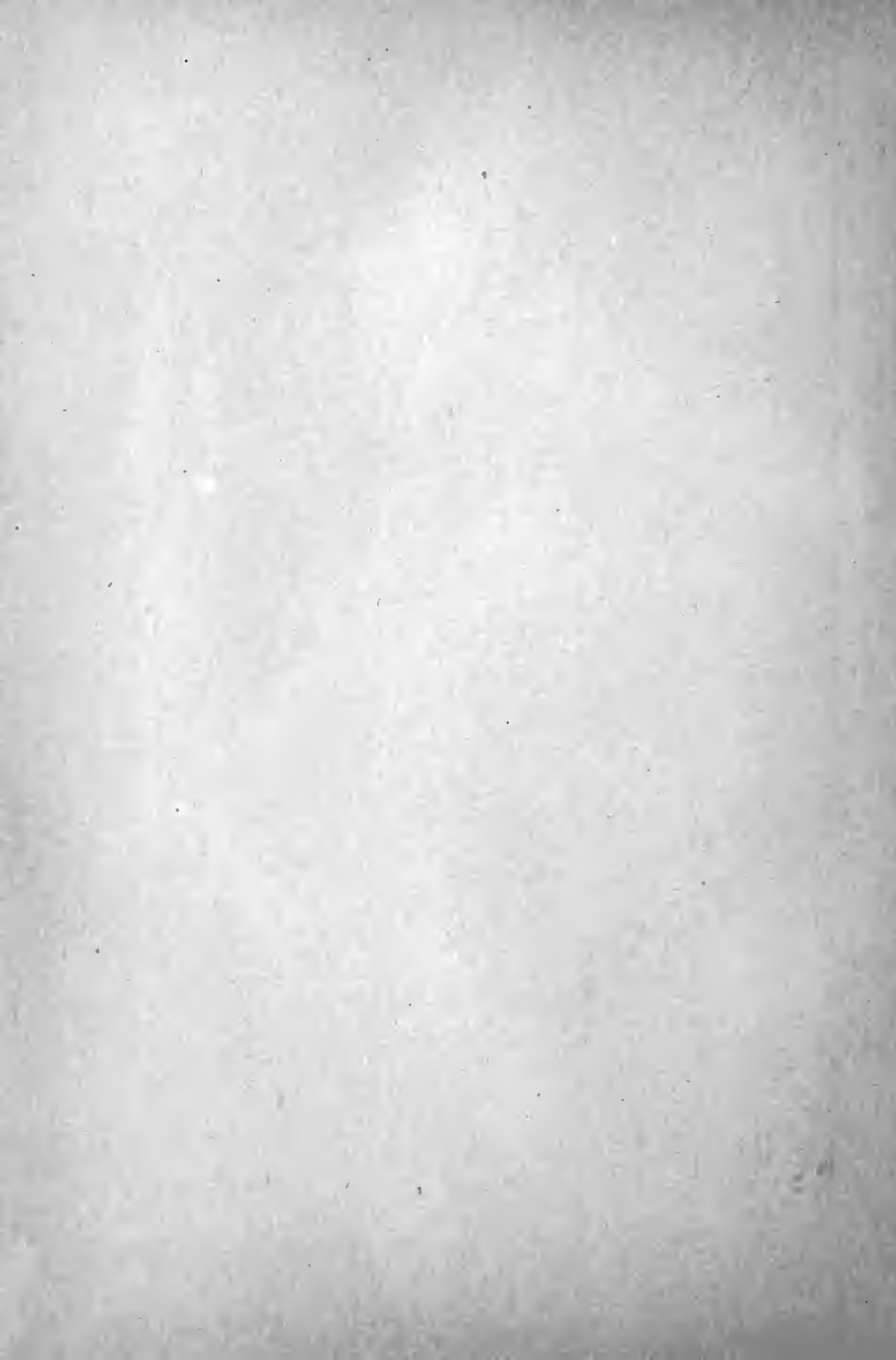
by tongue and pen until his death, at the ripe age of 92, at Madrid, in 1566.

Like demons sowing broken oaths.

While the national Spanish feeling in regard to America was that of a world rescued from heathendom, there were not wanting writers who tore the veil of the hypocritical colonists aside, and under that 'twas "but base avarice that spurred them on." In "El Nuevo Mundo, Jorn 1, Lope de Vega wrote: (In the character, indeed, of Idolatry who is supposed to be repelling the introduction of the Spaniards and their religion into his particular realm.)

Religion is the color and the cloak ;
But, gold and silver, hid within the earth,
Are all they truly seek and strive to win.







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